



Evaluation of Russian Far East NGO Support Program

December 17, 2001

Submitted to:

U.S. Agency for International Development
Office of Democratic Initiatives and Human Resources
Moscow, Russia

Prepared by:

Management Systems International
McKinney Russell
Alexander Borovikh
Olga Zinovieva
600 Water Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024
Tel. 202/484-7170
Fax. 202/488-0754

Contract no. AEP-I-00-00-00024-00
Task Order no. 806



Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN RUSSIAN.....	2
III. ASSESSMENT JUSTIFICATION AND STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY	4
IV. KEY IMPLEMENTERS AND HOW THEY PERFORMED	6
A. The Small Grants Program for local NGOs	7
B. Provision of quality consulting services for NGOs through a network of regional NGO resource centers	11
C. Publication of a bi-monthly magazine for NGOs in the region.....	12
D. Development of a team of professional NGO trainers	13
E. Creation of a database for NGO organizations and resources.....	14
V. FIVE FAR EASTERN RESOURCE CENTERS.....	15
A. Vladivostok.....	16
B. Khabarovsk.....	17
C. Yakutsk.....	19
D. Magadan	20
E. Blagoveshchensk	22
VI. ISAR-RFE MANAGEMENT OF THE RESOURCE CENTER NETWORK	24
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS	26

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The three-person evaluation team fielded by MSI in October and November 2001 found that ISAR, the recipient, had overall performed well in carrying out a cooperative agreement for the USAID Mission in the Far Eastern regions of Russia. This report notes areas of unevenness in project management, offers field-based insights into how the CA has been implemented and the work of the five principal resource centers that benefited from the project, and recommends that USAID continue to be active in this field.

The CA, extended for a third year in spring 2001, comes to its end on April 30, 2002. Under it, the Vladivostok office of the Institute for Social Action and Renewal, ISAR-RFE, was committed to support the growth and strengthening of NGO resource centers, and through them the burgeoning regional NGOs, in eight major cities in the region. Key components of the agreement, its core activities, were these:

- A small grants program for regional NGOs;
- Provision of consulting services for NGOs through resource centers (RCs);
- Publication of a magazine for NGOs;
- Offering of training for RC trainers; and
- Creation of an NGO database.

The full team or members of it spent two to three days each in five of the eight cities where RCs are active. These were Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Yakutsk, Blagoveshchensk, and Magadan. We met with stakeholders including the RC leaderships, their NGO clients, and, where possible, government, media, and business representatives.

We found that the main component, the small grants program, had been very well planned and publicized, that many beginning organizations got good advice on how to bid, and that all concerned viewed the process as an equitable one. Over \$500,000 in grants ranging from \$500 to \$5000 were made to 187 grant recipients of the 685 applicants who bid in eight competitive rounds. Some 60 participants in the grant process answered the team's questionnaire about it and their views are reflected in the annex to this report. Other questionnaires in the annex reflect NGOs' progress in institutional development and their attitudes about the project magazine.

Training of consultants was generally well done. Training of trainers did not work out as well. The magazine was well received, though many felt it could be better done for a wider audience. The database was a clear weak spot – it is little used and is not kept up to date.

Beginning on page 14 the report offers descriptions of each of the five RCs and the diverse contexts in which they work. A heartening trend toward greater reliance on local resources is noted. We analyze the relations of each of them with client NGOs, describe their links with government, business, and the media, and offer examples of the varying impacts the small grants program have had on each. In three of the five cities we found strong and well-focused management and activities. There is room in Vladivostok and in Khabarovsk for improvement. In the former, we noted unevenness in the ways the ISAR-RFE office has carried out its management role and recommend that RC activities in the province become a separate function.

Recommendations beginning on page 25 sum up our findings. We stress the need for better-planned training for the RC network and for giving the magazine a wider role and audience. Looking ahead to a needed continuation of the NGO support effort, we suggest that three future core activities should be provision of services to local communities, stronger development of the RC network, and promotion of civil society concepts among the wider public in the RFE.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN RUSSIAN

Команда из трех человек, сформированная организацией MSI, в октябре-ноябре 2001 г. провела оценку деятельности ISAR на территории Дальнего Востока РФ. Специалисты по оценке пришли к выводу о том, что в целом кооперативное соглашение ISAR с миссией USAID было выполнено. В отчете обозначены слабые, с точки зрения управления проектом, аспекты; сформулированы обоснованные заключения по реализации Кооперативного Соглашения (CA) и работе пяти основных ресурсных центров, поддерживаемых проектом, а так же сформулированы рекомендации USAID о продолжении деятельности в этом направлении.

Весной 2001 г срок действия соглашения между ISAR и USAID был продлен на третий год. Срок продления соглашения истекает 30 апреля 2002 г. В соответствии с условиями соглашения офис Института социальных преобразований и возрождения (Institute of Social Action and Renewal) ISAR-RFE во Владивостоке поддерживал деятельность ресурсных центров для НКО, а через них растущие региональные НКО в восьми крупных городах региона. Основные направления деятельности ISAR, сформулированные в соглашении, включают:

- *Поддержка новых инициатив НКО через Программу Малых Грантов*
- *Предоставление качественных консультаций НКО через сеть ресурсных центров.*
- *Издание журнала для НКО с целью обмена проектными идеями.*
- *Создание команды профессиональных тренеров для НКО*
- *Создание доступной базы данных.*

Команда по оценке в полном составе или ее члены работали по два-три дня в пяти из восьми городов, в которых действуют ресурсные центры. Среди них были следующие города – Владивосток, Хабаровск, Якутск, Благовещенск и Магадан. Были организованы встречи с руководителями ресурсных центров, лидерами НКО-клиентами ресурсных центров, а так же, где было возможно, с представителями местной администрации, СМИ и деловых кругов.

Было установлено, что программа малых грантов, одно из направлений деятельности ISAR, была очень хорошо спланирована и информация о ней широко распространялась. Многие начинающие организации получили качественные консультации по участию в конкурсе. Все заинтересованные стороны считают распределение грантов справедливым. Общая сумма выданных грантов составила более \$500 000, величина гранта была установлена в пределах от \$500 до \$5 000. Всего было выдано 187 грантов из 685 заявок поданных на восемь конкурсов. Около 60 получателей гранта участвовали в анкетировании, проведенном командой по оценке. Результаты анкетирования приведены в соответствующем приложении. Остальные анкеты в приложении отражают результаты анкетирования по вопросам развития НКО и мнения о журнале.

В основном был хорошо проведен тренинг по подготовке консультантов, что нельзя сказать о тренинге для тренеров. Журнал был хорошо принят, хотя многие участники опроса говорили, что не все было сделано для расширения его аудитории. База данных оказалась слабым местом – она мало использовалась и не обновлялась.

В начале страницы 14 отчета дается описание каждого из пяти ресурсных центров и тех разных условий, в которых они работают. Отмечается положительная тенденция большей опоры на местные ресурсы. Был проведен анализ взаимоотношений каждого центра с НКО –клиентами ресурсных центров, местной администрацией, деловыми кругами, СМИ. Были приведены различные примеры влияния программы малых грантов. В трех из пяти городов мы обнаружили сильное управление и высокую деловую активность. Во Владивостоке и Хабаровске есть много того, что можно делать лучше. В первом были обнаружены проблемы, связанные с выполнением офисом ISAR-RFE функции управления, и рекомендовали отделить деятельность ресурсного центра в крае.

Рекомендации на странице 25 отчета, подытоживают собранные факты. Мы подчеркиваем необходимость улучшения планирования программы тренинга для сети ресурсных центров, а так же важность предоставления журналу большей роли и аудитории. Думая о продолжении поддержки НКО на Дальнем Востоке, мы предлагаем три основных направления работы: предоставление услуг местным сообществам, более интенсивное развитие сети ресурсных центров и продвижение основных принципов гражданского общества среди населения в регионах Дальнего Востока.

III. ASSESSMENT JUSTIFICATION AND STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY

ISAR, the Institute for Social Action and Renewal, is a well established and highly respected Washington, DC-based US non-governmental organization whose activities in the environmental field date back to the final years of the Soviet Union. Then, its initials stood for the more anodyne title of Institute for Soviet-American Relations. After the Soviet collapse, ISAR began building an enviable track record in the early 1990s as executor of a number of USAID and other programs in support of environmental and ecological goals in other parts of the former USSR, including European Russia, the Caucasus, and central Asia.

An ISAR presence working in these fields in the Russian Far East, a vast underpopulated region nearly as large as the continental United States, was established in 1993. Some four years later, the organization presciently perceived a pressing need in the region for external support to other, non-environmental initiative groups and NGOs that were being largely neglected. It prepared late in 1997 and submitted to the USAID Mission in Moscow a persuasive concept paper describing the kind of support program it could effectively mount in the RFE to support regional centers and their work with local NGOs and initiative groups.

A Cooperative Agreement signed in May 1998, 118-A-00-98-00078-00, brought this project to life as the RFE NGO Support Program in Russia. Its five core activities were a small grants program, training in consultation for NGOs, publication of a bi-monthly magazine for NGOs, development of a team of professional trainers, and creation of an NGO database. Steady progress and effective management of these activities led to a one-year extension of the CA through April 30, 2002.

The area in question, the closest part of the Russian Federation to the United States, has continued to grow in economic importance. Recent major contracts with American gas and oil companies for development of resources in Sakhalin in the easternmost part of the region have provoked a fresh wave of interest in it.

At the same time, the AID Mission, ISAR, and other interested entities on the ground have seen clearly that there remains substantial room for further support and growth of the non-government sector, even as political and economic changes, in the region and in Moscow, bring brighter portents.

It is in this context that the Mission contracted with Management Systems International of Washington, DC, in late summer of 2001 for the latter to carry out an evaluation or assessment of the project to date, the results of which constitute the report in hand.

The team leader was Russian-speaking MSI Senior Associate McKinney Russell, director in 1994-97 of USAID's Institutional Partnership Project in Russia and Ukraine, one of the major technical assistance projects undertaken in the NIS by the Agency to date. His team consisted of Aleksandr Borovikh, co-president of the Moscow-based Center for NGO Support, a broadly experienced NGO specialist, and Olga Zinovieva, an exchanges specialist who managed logistical and editorial tasks.

There are *seven resource centers* (RC) with which ISAR-RFE has principally worked in the first 30 months of this project. They are located in the cities of *Birobidzhan*, *Blagoveshchensk*,

Khabarovsk, Magadan, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Yakutsk, and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Further, the ISAR-RFE office in **Vladivostok** has functioned as a RC for Primorskiy Kray, the province of which its site is the capital.

Two constraints worked against the team's gaining a full on-the-spot picture of RC operations and their support from ISAR in all eight locales. These were the time pressures imposed by the schedule, necessarily fairly late in the project's life to allow for the project's achievements to be fairly gauged; and the paucity of air connections within the region. Prior to the start of the evaluation, USAID had eliminated Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk from the list of cities to be visited. Birobidzhan regrettably proved to be more or less inaccessible within any reasonable period of time.

As a consequence, **five cities, all sites of substantial RC activity, were visited by all or some of the team's members.** The three were in Vladivostok Oct. 25-28, in Khabarovsk Oct. 28-30, in Yakutsk Oct. 30-Nov. 2, Blagoveshchensk Nov. 12-14 (Borovikh), and Magadan Nov. 13-15 (Russell and Zinovieva). In all cases the great difficulty of making logical and convenient air connections – which, among other things, forced team members to make two separate trips to the region from Moscow – was a limiting operational factor.

Detailed and intensive **interviews with NGO stakeholders and on-site observation** were the team's principal information-gathering technique. The team leader had had extensive conversations in Washington with USAID, ISAR's president and project officer, and with State Department officials responsible for the RFE. In the field we talked at length with ISAR and RC staff, met with focus groups composed mostly of grant recipients, saw several unsuccessful bidders for grants in each city, and interviewed representatives of the mass media, business circles, and local government structures. The team leader also met with the acting US Consul General in Vladivostok. In many instances the team split up to allow for a greater number of encounters.

The team developed three **questionnaires for NGO representatives** to respond to. The first invited them to describe the impact that the project had had on their institutional development. A second probed the NGOs' reactions to the small grants program, and a third provided feedback on the bi-monthly magazine, *Notes from the Far East*, which ISAR had published under the cooperative agreement. Many whom we met in the cities responded in detail to the questionnaires, and a number of responses were also obtained from cities with resource centers that were not on our itinerary. The 179 respondents' main opinions in these three areas are reflected in the body of the report and in the section of annexes that follows it.

IV. KEY IMPLEMENTERS AND HOW THEY PERFORMED

The principal implementer of this agreement has been the Russian Far East office in Vladivostok of the Washington-based American NGO ISAR, the Initiative for Social Action and Renewal. **ISAR-RFE**, as it is called, has managed USAID's NGO Support Program there since its inception in May 1998. It has directly reported to the Washington office, not to ISAR's representation in Moscow. Secondary implementers have been the Russian **Resource Centers** located in the principal cities in the region.

The program was designed to help achieve the Mission's **Strategic Objective 2.1**. Specifically the program has aimed at increasing better-informed citizens' participation in Russia's political and economic decision-making by strengthening civil society in the RFE through nurturing sustainable and professional development of the region's NGO sector.

We noted **many successes** in working toward this strategic objective at the ISAR-RFE office in Vladivostok and at the resource centers in the five other cities we visited. Important work remains to be done, in the regions served by these resource centers and in similar centers in Birobidzhan, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, and Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. ISAR-RFE has been assisting centers in these cities as well under the CA but they could not be visited during this evaluation due to the time and distance limitations noted above.

As program manager and administrator, ISAR-RFE has had to display professional **management practices** in each program area and for the program overall. Beginning on page 23, the report discusses ISAR-RFE's effectiveness in carrying out those responsibilities. The report draws substantially on the team's observations and talks with representatives and stakeholders at the five regional resource centers we visited.

The original cooperative agreement stressed the central importance of these centers' role in building up the NGO movement in the Far East. Despite the similarity of their missions, we observed substantial differences among the five sites visited. From page 14 we offer **descriptions of the several resource centers** and the contrasting ways they work in order to provide fuller context for the Recipient's efforts.

In a final section on page 26 we make our **recommendations** about the future course of possible further USAID commitment to assist third sector development in the RFE.

The following section presents our findings and conclusions about how the **core activities** were carried out. We include a statement on each concerning its effects, if any, on the larger community (*in italics*), and summary recommendations about each activity for the future (**emboldened**).

Thus, the **five core activities** as laid down in the cooperative agreement were these:

- Carrying out of a small grants program for NGOs
- Providing consulting services for NGOs through a network of regional NGO resource centers
- Publication of a bi-monthly magazine for NGO readers
- Development of a team of professional NGO trainers
- Creation of a publicly accessible database of NGO organizations and resources.

A. The Small Grants Program for local NGOs

Everyone concerned with the project agrees that this grant program has been *the most important single component* of the USAID-funded Program for NGO support in RFE. ISAR's manager of the program defined the goal of this core activity as "financial support to local NGOs", a formulation that dates back to the program's inception in 1998 and which has not been modified since then.

The Recipient has held *eight rounds of grant competitions* in the 30-month history of the project to date. The number of grants awarded was 187 for a total of \$504,578, and the average for each was \$2,698. This table summarizes their results by round and by gross amount of grants.

Round	Number of Grants		Amount \$
	Submitted	Awarded	
1. January 1999	87	23	\$54,171
2. May 1999	92	19	\$51,455
3. September 1999	57	19	\$54,098
4. January 2000	62	28	\$77,905
5. May 2000	112	23	\$75,076
6. September 2000	116	25	\$73,353
7. July 2001	82	20	\$45,520
8. September 2001	77	30	\$73,000

This second table shows how the grants awarded were shared among the NGOs in each of the resource center areas:

Region	Number of Grants	Amount
Primorsky Kray	43	\$114,718
Magadanskaya Oblast	20	\$59,187
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	17	\$43,133
Amurskaya Oblast	30	\$78,351
Jewish Autonomous Republic	11	\$31,823
Khabarovsk Kray	31	\$88,852
Sakhalinskaya Oblast	21	\$50,543
Kamchatskaya Oblast	14	\$37,971

Four rough *levels of funding* for grants have been in effect:

- **\$500 grants.** These are called "emergency grants" are provided to NGOs and initiative groups for special events or as top-up or matching funds for other projects.
- **\$1000 grants.** Such grants usually go for the funding of a project to be carried out by an NGO or initiative group that lacks a substantial grant record;
- **\$3000 grants.** These have supported projects by an entity that already has a established grant record; and

- **\$5000 grants** which go for partnership projects done by two or more groups in partnership. This level of funding was introduced at the time of the fifth grant competition.

The team learned that the so-called emergency grants of \$500 were awarded very infrequently due to the length of time required to determine whether or not a grant should be awarded and the time elapsed between submission of proposal and transfer of funds. As a result, only about 50% of the funds earmarked for such emergency grants were in actuality expended.

RECOMMENDATION: We suggest that if the processing time for \$500 emergency grants cannot be sharply accelerated the category be eliminated.

One of ISAR's most experienced staffers, Olga Likhachova, continues to supervise the grants program in addition to her responsibilities as acting director of the ISAR-RFE office in Vladivostok. As we found during our extended discussions there, she and her colleagues have developed an impressive roster of **key guidelines and procedures** to ensure the uniformity and fairness of the grants process.

They define, among other things, the exact nature of announcements of new competitions, the forms to be used, questionnaires for selection of expert panel members, a spell-out of how the latter are to perform their duties, checklists for site visit procedures, and so on. We found that ISAR-RFE has defined and refined these procedures in an exemplary way.

In all our discussions with grant recipients, we heard **no complaints or questions** about the way ISAR has ensured equal and fair consideration of all applicants' submissions.

The chair of Primorskiy Kray's Committee for Public Organizations, Tatiana Filonova, offered us an encouraging example of one small way management of the program has affected the wider community in the province. (Ms. Filonova had been wisely invited by ISAR to serve on its most recent expert grants panel and had gotten very interested in its programs.)

The Kray committee is now making active plans to organize a grants competition as part of a coming NGO Fair of its own, encouraged by the example of ISAR-RFE's organization of a similar event. She said that they will adapt ISAR's documentation and procedures for their small grants program -- imitation, as always, being the sincerest form of flattery.

We appreciated the **close collaboration** sustained by ISAR-RFE with all the resource centers while planning and running the grant program. The RCs got all the information they needed to inform their clients in a timely way about upcoming competitions. Their roles were to make sure the local NGOs knew about them, to offer consultations on proposal writing, and to organize trainings as they were needed. The leaders of local NGOs whom we talked to in the field said they were well pleased with the level and quality of the information they got.

Among the goals held in mind as the Recipient prepared and executed these careful grant procedures were **maximum transparency and getting the best possible information about the proposals' eventual impact**. The latter point, they found, was especially difficult for many applicants. Helping the RCs and through them the NGOs to visualize and describe the eventual impact of a proposed project required a special effort on the part of the ISAR-RFE staff. Their success in helping RCs meet the NGOs' needs is suggested by the NGOs' responses to our

questionnaire (see annex). They show that more than 70% of them turned to the RCs for assistance with their grant bid; and over 60% called upon the RCs during project implementation.

During our multiple interviews with stakeholders of the small grant program, including leaders of NGOs that had applied but failed to win grants, the only critical comment we heard related to the turndown letters that the losers had gotten. A number of respondents resented the letters' perceived vagueness and failure to define reasons for non-success clearly enough.

RECOMMENDATION: Failure to win a grant is always a disappointment, and even more of one for the inexperienced NGO. It should not be further discouraged from trying again by receiving an inadequate turndown letter. The Recipient should review procedures so as to improve the quality and specificity of rejections.

We found that ISAR-RFE and the RCs routinely invest much effort and time to make clear to local NGOs the specifics of each grant competition. In the established procedure for applications ISAR-RFE offers an admirably detailed explanation of the requirements, rules and procedures of the grant program. This *high level of transparency* arms NGOs with greater motivation to submit proposals.

Despite this, the evaluation team heard from a number of NGO leaders that the mandate or priorities of many competitions were rather too broad and insufficiently clear. This has left some NGOs in the dark about whether their submission of a proposal held hope of success in the inadequately defined terms of a given grant category.

One example of this was cited to us in several conversations. An important small grant element in the project was entitled *“Tomorrow Starts Today: Support for NGOs in the Russian Far East”*. This title can readily suggest the conclusion that the small grants offered are intended to support NGOs and their organizations, rather than to lead to palpable progress in hitting at the social and other problems that the people of the region are struggling to overcome.

The goals then spelled out tend to reinforce the same misconception: they define the project's aims as “increasing the number and level of activity of NGOs acting directly in the interests of their members and clients; and increasing youth participation in civil activities through youth involvement in NGOs.” Although ISAR-RFE tried in the announcement to clarify its purposes by giving examples of potential projects, a number of our respondents pointed to this announcement as a source of confusion about the small grants program in question.

We would suggest that the foregoing is a useful that language that is appropriate for internal definitions of a project's purposes (which is what the words quoted clearly were) may be misleading in public announcements.

RECOMMENDATION: Special care should be taken in defining the goals of grants when they are announced. Their ultimate aim in broader terms relative to the society and people's well being should be clear, and NGOs should be able to determine whether or not their own capacities and goals are in synch with the grant's purposes.

As for the *monitoring of grants by ISAR-RFE* as they go forward, we were told that the Recipient's people or representatives of the RC in the region visit some 25% of grantees. Grant recipients replies to our questionnaire, however, indicate that monitoring visits were much more frequent. A higher level of monitoring is clearly desirable, not only to ensure compliance and to check progress but also to provide a reality check on what is happening in the field and to contribute to the on-going assessment of a region's changing needs and challenges. (See related comment below.) It is useful that ISAR has developed written instructions about carrying out "ordinary" or routine site visits, as well as monitoring visits of an emergency nature when serious problems arise. If legal issues surface, the organization can call upon its engaged legal consultant Alexey Rzhessky, which whom we also met.

The question of just *which areas of NGO activity* the small grants should be offered in seemed to us a central issue. The principal emphases of the grant program had been first defined in the cooperative agreement with AID in May 1998. They were human rights, youth, women's issues, health and the environment, and social services

Until round 7 of the small grants program in July 2001, these priorities remained unchanged, this despite the fact that some of them evidently did not correspond to the current interests or needs of local communities and their NGOs. The following table shows the imbalance that obtained during rounds 1 through 6 when three of the categories, human rights, women's issues, and health and the environment, drew many fewer applicants than did the other categories.

Priority	Number of Grants awarded	Amount
Human rights (rounds 1-6)	15	\$44,045
Youth movement (rounds 1-6)	57	\$164,079
Women issues (round 1-6)	11	\$25,129
Health and environment (round 1-6)	10	\$30,232
Development of social services (round 1-6)	44	\$122,573
Improving NGOs capacity to provide services to citizens and local communities (rounds 7 and 8)	26	\$62,004
Youth participation in socially useful projects to develop their civic engagement (rounds 7 and 8)	24	\$56,516

In spring 2000, at the time the USAID Mission extended the CA for a third year, it expressed the desire to place more emphasis on supporting NGOs that had social services provision as a primary purpose. Youth programming was also seen as a high priority. Based upon its own reading of the situation, as demonstrated by the foregoing table, the Recipient agreed. As a result, the number of focus areas for small grants was cut back from the earlier five down to two, viz., social services provision and youth support.

We judge that this sort of *reassessment of the RCs and NGOs needs* should be an ongoing process. The results of focused research work should serve as the basis for program decisions that set priorities for the grant program. In discussing this point with ISAR staff, they added the view that there should be clear coordination between the grant program and the program's training program.

RECOMMENDATION: Not less than once yearly Recipient staff, together with the RCs, should review the line-up of priority areas for grant allocation in order to consider appropriate changes that take into account changing needs of local communities and the specifics of socio-economic circumstances of the regions.

The following chart shows how respondents of small grants evaluate their lasting impact on their institutions. (See annex for full text of this questionnaire.) We note that *increased professionalism and a better image in the community* rank quite high and were cited by some two-thirds of respondents.

Excerpt from questionnaire

4. How do you evaluate the most important results of your participation in the small grant program? Based upon your experience, please indicate your level of agreement with the factors below:

	Agree	Agree partially	Dis-agree
1. Our participation in the grant program enabled us to increase the number of people whom we can help.	84.1%	3.2%	0.0%
2. We have been able to increase the outreach of our services	50.8%	27.0%	7.9%
3. We were able to add new services to our program	61.9%	17.5%	1.6%
4. We have become more professional technically in our area	68.3%	9.5%	4.8%
5. We are more professional and organized	57.1%	27.0%	1.6%
6. Our image in the community has been improved	66.7%	15.9%	3.2%
7. We were able to find new sources of funding	42.9%	20.6%	11.1%
8. We improved our relationship with local authorities	46.0%	30.2%	6.3%
9. We have established new contacts with NGOs in our region	71.4%	9.5%	3.2%

B. Provision of quality consulting services for NGOs through a network of regional NGO resource centers

ISAR-RFE did *a good job of training resource center people* to be able to provide consultations to clients in their regions. The separation of the training of consultants from the training of trainers was a sound, demand-driven decision. During the consultant training the essential elements of NGO development received the attention they deserve. However, we note that a number of NGOs were at early stages of their institutional growth. The subjects they most needed were those like proposal writing, project development, the legalities of registration, accounting procedures, and answers to tax questions. Not all these subjects were addressed during the training of consultants.

We were pleased to find that all the RCs we visited were *regularly providing consultations* to local NGOs. Inevitably the quality and range of issues on which an NGO could receive advice varied from center to center, depending on the level of professionalism of individual staff members. All the RCs have internal procedures for setting appointments for consultations. NGOs we talked with were comfortable with the attitude of the RC staffs and their readiness to help. Nevertheless the team did not see much evidence that consultations were offered by all the centers in other important areas like fund-raising, marketing, financial management, or human

resources development. These are themes that also were not covered at length during the preparation of the NGO consultation specialists. More developed NGOs thought that the time had come to start providing *more sophisticated consultations* on the issues concerning institutional development, including advocacy.

The larger community clearly benefited from the open door policies pursued by the resource centers. In particular, initiative groups striving to enter NGO ranks gained from having easy access to qualified advice.

RECOMMENDATION: We recommend that the structure and content of future training for consultants be comprehensively reviewed to ensure that the subjects offered respond cogently to the current needs of the more developed NGOs.

C. Publication of a bi-monthly magazine for NGOs in the region

The first issue in 1998 of the magazine, *“Notes from the Far East”*, looks very different from the most recent ones. ISAR staff wrote almost all of the articles in the former. There were few photographs and the main illustrative material was a whimsical cartoon figure whose body was composed of shaggy sheets of paper.

The latest issue has grown to a *full 48-page magazine* with photographs – of real people – on most pages. Most of the articles are the work of NGO activists from the resource centers and grass roots organizations. The issue announces a new feature called the Round Table and calls for readers’ contributions to a freewheeling discussion in the coming issue on a subject of particular salience to the community, viz., the state of relations between the region’s NGOs and the press. News of current interest to readers, like grant competitions and new electronic resources, are more prominent, although one senses from readers’ comments (see questionnaire excerpt below) that there is room for even more.

A professional journalist and editor has been in charge of the magazine since late 1998. A far-reaching study by ISAR among readers in 1999 led to major changes. The editor told us that her most eager readers are in the isolated areas far from major cities, the so-called “glubinka”. Copies for libraries in those areas are especially sought after. Articles are resolutely non-political. The magazine focuses on the wide range of issues at the heart of the RFE-NGO project.

Distribution of the *2000 copies of each issue* concentrates on the seven resource centers and their NGO clients, as well as the libraries just mentioned. A number of people the team met with, especially representatives of the legislative and executive government structures, were quite *unfamiliar with the Notes*. Several press people were likewise unaware of the publication.

There was the persistence throughout our field travel of the view that much wider awareness of the third sector’s impact in the Far East, or indeed its very existence, was essential. The Notes look to us like an obviously helpful tool to meet this felt need.

Most of the *comments about the magazine* in our focus groups and individual encounters were quite positive. The *chart* below is derived from our questionnaire on the magazine (see text in the annexes to this report) and is based on the reactions of 61 respondents in six RCs.

The magazine clearly has a *wide and attentive readership* in the NGO community. Among the criticisms voiced were that certain writers' views appear with too great frequency, and that the Notes needed to be better organized so as not to present such a mixture of reports from all over the vast region. The idea was raised that setting up of editorial offices in the RCs to work with the ISAR-RFE editor would ensure broader coverage and a better sense of grass roots NGO concerns. At several sessions we asked whether people would be ready to pay for the magazine, but very few NGO representatives were ready to do so. For this to happen the whole concept of the magazine would have to change to bring it closer to the profile of professional commercial magazines. The ISAR-RFE editor believes that the magazine should remain free of charge and this seems to be the view of her colleagues.

Excerpt from Questionnaire

4. Has the magazine succeeded in advancing toward these four goals?

Goals of the magazine	Reached	Reached partially	Not reached
1. Helping NGOs find new resources	33.3%	57.9%	7.0%
2. Sharing experiences	70.2%	29.8%	0.0%
3. Encouraging cooperation among NGOs	40.4%	49.1%	3.5%
4. Increasing the community's visibility within the region	47.4%	36.8%	12.3%

In spite of steady improvement since it started, the publication of "Notes from the Far East" has apparently had little effect among the wider community in the region. This has been the result of a policy followed by some RCs, but not all, to limit its distribution to NGOs and to public information sources like libraries.

RECOMMENDATION: The evaluation team suggests that the policy of limited distribution be changed. If potential stakeholders in NGO development like officials in government structures and business associations, as well as representatives of the media, regularly receive a well-written and lively publication about the third sector and its deeds, the effect should be a strengthening of the NGO community and its image. Changes in the editorial management of the magazine will naturally be necessary to effect this change of focus.

D. Development of a team of professional NGO trainers

A structured *program of training for trainers and for consultants* was put in place by ISAR-RFE for the first year of the project, 1998-1999. This round was successfully completed. For whatever reason, the second round of training in the subsequent year did not have a training of trainers component, only one for consultants. Several RCs expressed their regret at this shortcoming. The hope had been that trainers attached to the RCs would be able, inter alia, to offer the NGO community training opportunities for fee. This has not worked out as planned because few are well enough funded to pay, and because the caliber of training that could be offered was not yet on a high enough level to justify costs.

We looked into the Recipient's *procedures when organizing training* both for trainers and for consultants. It did not apparently set any criteria for taking part in such training. Applicants had

merely to fill out a questionnaire expressing interest. Some of the people then chosen seemed not to be qualified to make the most of the training offered.

The team noted also that neither the participants in the training program nor the resource centers themselves had played much of a role in the *selection of the topics* for the training program. ISAR-RFE apparently proposed to present those themes that the training organization had on the shelf. The resultant line-up of topics included conflict resolution, team building, public relations, public campaigns, fundraising and project development – all important subjects but the more basic topics for beginning NGOs were lacking in the line-up.

This absence of certain essential elements in the training of consultants led to unevenness in their ability to offer consultations. Some were unable consequently to present a systematic or comprehensive view of NGO development or the impact it could have on the lives of local communities. Several of the NGO leaders with whom we talked called for a *more systematic approach* to training of both consultants and trainers. Indeed coordination of efforts in both areas made good sense to many respondents.

RECOMMENDATION: A fresh and pointed look at the whole area of training under the project is due and should be a high priority early in any continuation of the project. A well-defined strategy for NGOs training at several levels is needed. Such a strategy should be based on fresh information about NGO needs by region and should pursue region-specific goals.

E. Creation of a database for NGO organizations and resources

The database is in being. It is regularly fed by RCs who submit information to ISAR-RFE about newly registered NGOs in their regions. These updates are duly entered into the database, but they do not routinely get sent to the mailing list for Notes from the Far East. The RCs seem to be the only sources of new information for the database, and this seems to be a narrow source.

In talks with NGO leaders, the team was struck by *how little known this asset is* to most of them. A number said that they did not need it or would not use it. It would appear that its sole use would be as an instrument for information gathering and analysis within the RCs and ISAR-RFE. We found that three of the five RCs visited have built up their own databases. Several said that ISAR's was badly out-of-date and of no real use to them.

The database is an example of a core activity that has had no discernible impact on the wider community. The only outside bodies that might be interested in referring to it are the mass media and elements in government structures that track NGO trends and their level of awareness is very low.

RECOMMENDATION: We suggest that the database as it now exists and is used does not justify its being considered to be a core activity of any follow-on project. In the future it could encompass the journal and outreach activities in general. It should in any case be updated if it is to have any real utility to anyone.

V. FIVE FAR EASTERN RESOURCE CENTERS

Members of the evaluation team spent several days working *in situ* with each of five of the RCs in the ISAR-RFE network. The following descriptions are meant to offer readers a sense of their variety and their differing prospects, and to provide context for understanding their common efforts on behalf of the region's NGOs. In order, the RCs visited were in Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Yakutsk, Blagoveshchensk, and Magadan.

For further contextual insight into the current status of NGOs in the Far East, we would draw the reader's attention to the results of our questionnaire on institutional development in the annexes to this report. This chart cited from it shows that although foreign funds and organizations were listed by about half of the respondents as a source of financial support, 37% of the NGOs state that they derive income from monetary contributions in their regions. Twenty-one percent use fundraising campaigns and events to support their activities. We attribute these encouraging trends at least in part to the USAID-ISAR grants program and the RCs' activism.

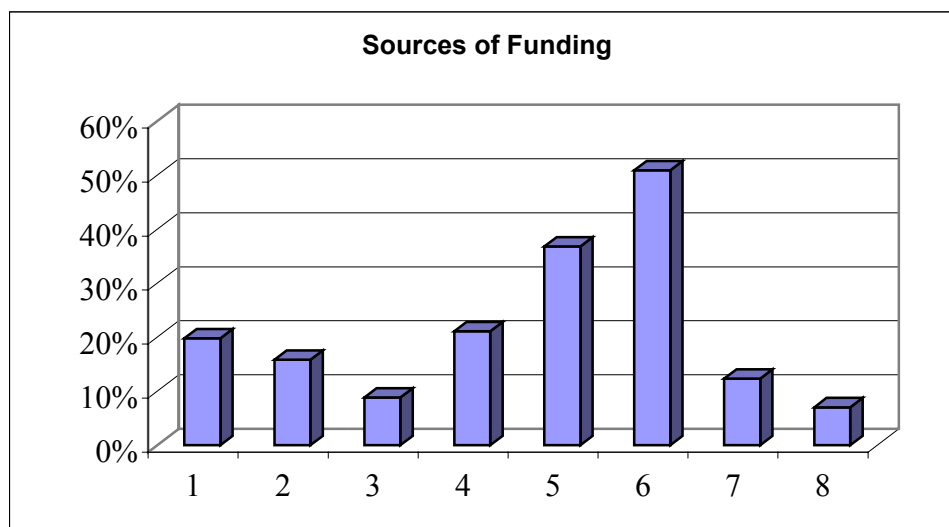
Excerpt from questionnaire:

Sources of Funding

Total: 58 respondents

2. What were your principal sources of funding? (Please mark the relevant items.)

1. Membership fees	19.8%
2. Government sources	15.8%
3. Russian foundations	8.8%
4. Fundraising activities	21.1%
5. Private sponsorship	36.8%
6. Foreign foundations and organizations	50.9%
7. Russian businesses	12.3%
8. Other	7.0%



A. Vladivostok

Vladivostok is a major port on the southern coast of Primorskiy Kray, the Maritime Province of Russia, and is the site of the only US diplomatic representation in the Far East. As the headquarters of the Soviet Pacific fleet, it was for decades a city closed to all foreigners. It is the capital of the kray and is home to about one-third of all the people who live in the Russian Far East. Despite its picturesque hilly setting on the sea, somewhat reminiscent of San Francisco, the city has not developed into either an attractive or very efficient place. In recent years corrupt political leadership and neglect from Moscow have held back its growth. A September 2002 meeting of the 20-odd nations of APEC, the Asia Pacific Economic Council, will take place in the city for the first time. This is serving as a stimulus to the province's new governor to undertake major improvement plans in the city and region.



Downtown Vladivostok

The Vladivostok office of ISAR-RFE serves as Resource Center for many NGOs in the Primorskiy Kray. Acting director of the office is long-time senior staffer Olga Likhachova, who has brought substantial experience in small grants management to her responsibilities. One noted the extreme modesty of the facilities in which some 15 staff people work and work well. The crowded basement offices are in a rundown residential building rather far from the center. There is no apparent physical separation between the RFE-NGO project staff of perhaps 10 persons and those working on other projects, but this did not seem to resent any palpable problems. Many staffers are quite young, well educated, and come across as extremely committed to their work. They project alert competency.

1. The Center and its Clients. The center's NGO clients responded quickly to invitations to attend focus sessions and other meetings with the assessment team and seemed quite at home in the offices. During a well-attended focus group session, several NGO representatives commented that the provincial authorities were looking with much more favor on their activities since the ISAR grant program went into effect.

Improved tax legislation relating to NGOs is a priority concern and the group counts on ISAR for its involvement. Informing state officials about the third sector's programs was a concern, as was public information. The group clearly placed confidence in its ISAR interlocutors for further support and especially for the continuation of the small grants program. Despite the fact that those present were in organizations that are already fairly well established, their call for continued support by ISAR for start-up initiative groups was noteworthy.

2. Government, media, and business. In its role as functional RC for Primorsky Kray, ISAR has built up cordial relations with local government structures, but they do not seem to be as well developed as those noted in other regions. A current example of a wider relationship with the kray administration was the inclusion of several of its representatives as members of ISAR's expert panel on grant allocation. Our meeting with one of these officials elicited expressions of vivid new interest on her part in strengthening government-NGO links.

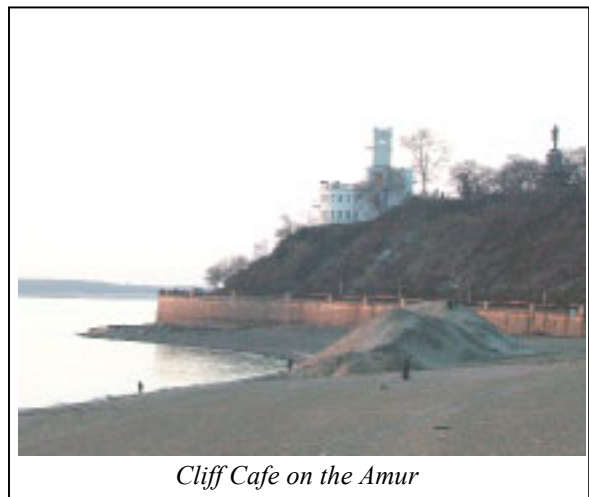
On the media front, fairly regular radio broadcasts about third sector activities are a feature of the local scene, including some call-in programming. At the grants event mentioned below, print and electronic media were well represented and there was prime-time television coverage of the event during which clear credit and appreciation were given to USAID and to ISAR. We saw little sign of significant interaction between the RC and the Vladivostok business community.

3. Impact of small grants. Of the several hundred consultations offered by the Vladivostok RC since the project began, those relating to small grant applications were the most popular. The efficacy of these consultations is reflected in part by the fact that applicants from the region won more grants awards than any other, about 23% of the total. The RC encouraged partnering arrangements.

One of the team members was able to attend a lively presentation by an NGO that works with disabled children that had recently won a \$4000 partnership grant under the ISAR-RFE project. This was a joint press conference of the city's Union of the Disabled with the partner NGO whose space will be used for the planned training program for the young people. Held in a city hall auditorium, the event was greatly enlivened by the dancing of some of the youngsters. Four different individuals over the life of the project to date have been responsible for RC activities in Primorskiy Kray and several have had broader duties working with the rest of the RC network. This has not helped assure continuity in service to the immediate Vladivostok region.

B. Khabarovsk

Khabarovsk is the capital of the kray, which bears its name and has benefited considerably from forward-looking and energetic leadership. The city is a major transportation center in the region and has made very rapid strides in modernizing itself in the last several years. It inaugurated its rebuilt cathedral during our visit and has taken the lead in several commercial sectors. It has an active American Russian Business Center and many foreign and domestic companies have preferred to establish themselves here rather than Vladivostok.



Cliff Cafe on the Amur

The **Khabarovsk** resource center is in a state of considerable flux. It is physically located in a newly registered NGO called Druzhina. The same person, Lyubov Latypova, who until a few months ago had directed the ISAR-RFE RC component in Khabarovsk within a far more solidly established entity, the Khabarovsk Cultural Fund, heads it. Personal animosity between Latypova and the head of the Fund, Svetlana Cherepanova, as well as disagreements over salary and the Fund's feeling that the RC did not fit conformably within its more commerce-oriented organization, were the apparent reasons for the departure of the former.

Druzhina occupies space belonging to the Fund. Continuing tensions relating to personnel transfers from the latter to the former have intensified the frictions. Our successful and informative focus group meeting with a dozen Khabarovsk NGO leaders was set up by the Fund,

not by Druzhina. Ms. Latypova has many professional interests, travels frequently, and was not in the city at the time of the team's visit. She has hired part-time an official of another NGO to manage an ISAR project grant to study NGO-mass media relations. Her absence from the city regrettably prevented the evaluation team from hearing her perspective on these and other issues. It seems clear, however, that ISAR-RFE must be closely involved in mediating among the players in Khabarovsk and in ensuring that its numerous NGOs get need the support and succor they need.

1. The Center and its Clients. The team met with about a dozen heads of NGOs who worked with the RC at a time when its locus was still the Cultural Fund. The meeting took place in fact at that institution's comfortable and profitable location on the city's main thoroughfare. Many RC clients are in the social sphere, institutions concerned with the well being of disadvantaged groups of many kinds. There was evident respect for Ms. Cherepanova but much credit was given to the absent Ms. Latypova who had been until recently the RC director within the Fund context. A team member made a separate visit to the head of the Center for Disabled Physicians, whose head gave warm praise to the leadership role the RC has played.

2. Government, media, and business. A visit to Galina Lysenko, the dynamic deputy director of the Kray administration's economic department, provided useful insights into the dynamics of the region and the third sector's possible roles. She said she had greatly admired the benefits that the small grants program had brought to her region and knew how vital it was that the third sector worked for the social benefit of the society. Lysenko had personally assembled a group of NGOs last spring to work out proposed legislation for governmental entities to introduce their own grant programs. Several have already done so. She is the author of a monograph soon to be published on the essential cooperation between NGOs and government administrations.

Unusual examples of media awareness of the third sector are the regular column about its activities that appears in the leading Khabarovsk daily and a radio program which also offers current news of its activities. Journalists on these media activities with whom we met stressed the usefulness of Latypova's cooperation on story development and the difficulty of presenting NGO news in sufficiently interesting terms to generate reader response.

As for the business sector, this relatively prosperous region offers a number of examples of private sector generosity for NGOs but no major breakthroughs seem to have occurred and the RC does not have much resonance with the for-profit sector.

3. Impact of the small grants. Mikhail Nepogodin is a Khabarovsk teacher in his mid-30s who is founder and head of a youth NGO called *Gran'*, or The Edge. This is an outdoor program for at-risk teenagers, which has become one of the best-known and most generously supported NGOs in the region. Especially striking is a contribution to the organization's work from city's police body. As Nepogodin told us, the small grants from ISAR – and there were three, one each year, which totaled \$11,000 -- made all the difference in his being able to institutionalize his program, publish a quarterly newspaper to spread news of the project, and become a true force in the community.

C. Yakutsk

***Yakutsk** is the capital of the Sakha Republic, as Yakutia was renamed several years ago. This vast land comprises one-fifth of the entire Russian landmass. It has undergone a cultural and ethnic renaissance since the collapse of the USSR, exemplified by a strikingly modern new national theater, just completed, for the Yakut performing arts. Foreign visitors, as we found out, must register with the republic's foreign affairs ministry when they arrive. English was recently proclaimed an official language of Sakha. Enormous tracts of the republic are state-owned nature preserves and environmental protection is a central preoccupation of many. Mineral resources, especially diamonds, are a source of actual and potential wealth.*



Yakutsk, capital of Republic of Sakha(Yakutia)

The most striking characteristic of Eyge, the resource center in **Yakutsk**, is the intimate and very fruitful symbiosis between the center and the Sakha Ministry of Natural Resources. Eyge's name in Yakut means, roughly, the noosphere, and the organization does educational and popularizing work on ecological issues with which the local government, as a representative told us, is enthusiastically pleased. Eyge has two offices on the ground floor of the ministry, one for its government-sponsored work and the other for its resource center activities on behalf of the ISAR-RFE project. The library, posters, statistics, and signage in each room are distinctly chosen for their relevance to one function or the other and the twain do not overlap. It benefits from institutional support grants as well from the Alton Jones Foundation.

The full-time director of Eyge, Valentina Dmitriyeva, is a physicist of Yakut origin and was among the most impressive and effective people whom the team met at any point in its peregrinations. Her consultant assistant Mikhail Samsonov, as well as the more junior staff of perhaps six persons, was alert and very engaged. The excellent two-day program of meetings set up by Eyge could not have been improved upon.

1. The Center and its Clients. Eyge has established a sophisticated and effective database of its own and can come up with required data about its clients with impressive rapidity. The center's database contains some 600 NGOs and initiative groups. One noted that the range of NGOs that do not have an ecological coloration is quite large – Eyge is there as an RC for all. Mr. Samsonov has benefited from an impressive range of training opportunities and seems to have applied them very well to consulting duties for the center's clients, as our focus group showed. Ms. Dmitriyeva expressed confidence that if ISAR support were withdrawn or ended that the trainings and seminars that Eyge can offer, for payment, would contribute to its continued existence.

2. Government, business, and the media. The significant financial and in-kind support that the center enjoys from the government far outstrips similar support seen elsewhere in the network. A senior representative of the ministry where Eyge is located told us that they wished that the organization's full energies could be devoted to ministry works because they were so effective.

Nevertheless, they appreciated the great value of the work it was doing on behalf of the NGOs and the society.

Sakha Republic deputy Anatoliy Goldman is chairman of the parliament's sub-committee for economics and investment and was one of the most senior government officials with whom the team met. A retired businessman with broad experience in Europe and the US, he had especially strong feelings about the essential role of foreign contributions to the social sector in Russia. "Organizations like Eyge are absolutely vital at this time of transition", he said. He has spoken out on behalf of NGOs in the parliament and wishes that they had their own spokesmen in the Il Tumen, Yakutia's parliament.

The head of the Ministry of Youth's NGO liaison section, who had earlier benefited personally from ISAR training, praised Eyge's work with the ministry in December 2000 in carrying out a Youth NGO fair highlighting the work of 28 organizations. Media representatives told us the RC is well reported in the press, and there is much appreciation in the republic for the work that it does. The ecological side of Dmitriyeva's shop produces its own very well edited bi-monthly magazine, the *Northern Shining*. Finally, Eyge has a grant from the Eurasia Foundation whose purpose is to develop modalities to encourage business support for NGOs, already relatively common in Sakha.

3. Impact of small grants. We talked with the founder of a small provincial NGO called Otsovstvo, Fatherhood. Its purposes are to support and train fathers of families whose earlier livelihoods have disappeared for one reason or another. Its successes in combating social ills that arise under these circumstances have been due in large measure to the grant benefits flowing from Eyge. A biology teacher at the focus group session spoke warmly about the high value she placed on the training in grant application writing she had gotten from Eyge that helped the organization move from initiative group to NGO status.

D. Magadan

Magadan on the Sea of Okhotsk was the most distant city the team visited. Within its oblast is the Kolyma region, site of one of the most notorious labor camps during the Soviet period and a destination for the exiled even before then. It is a region of transitory residents, of people who come to work for higher wages for a period of time and then return to their home areas in more propitious climes. Its permanent population is made up of many older people and many young ones. A measure of the region's sense of island-like isolation is that its residents refer to travel to other parts of Russia, where the trains reach, as going as the "materik", the continent. The region has energetic political leadership and is striving to catch up economically and socially with other parts of the Far East.

The Magadan resource center is fortunate to be led by director Yury Kryukov, an extraordinarily mature 22-year-old. He and his wife Viktoria, 24, began working as



Magadan

volunteers at the RC, Zhivushchaya Arktika – The Living Arctic – while still in school. The staff of eight is very highly motivated and is a strong collective group. Their offices are in two modest rooms in an apartment block in the city's center. The city government subsidizes the location and it is a lively gathering point most evenings for NGO representatives and friends.

1. The Center and its Clients. Something over 400 NGOs are registered in the oblast. Estimates are that around 100 are active. The RC maintains its own database and does not rely on ISAR's. During a group session, which the team held with about 25 representatives of NGOs, the respect in which the Center is held and the closeness of interaction between them and the RC, was patent. The Center, as a neat announcement informs clients, is open for consultations from two to six every afternoon. Judging from the many references in the focus group to the guidance, especially in grant application writing, which the RC had offered, there are many busy afternoons at the Center. We heard several warm testimonies from the NGO leaders about the effective guidance, especially in the completion of grant applications that they had received from the Zhivushchaya Arktika.

2. Government, media, and business. The RC was an energetic instigator in the creation of Coordinating Council for NGOs that was set up by the city of Magadan administration in 1997. It is an active member of the council. At the RC's urging and with its help, a new system of municipal grants for youth organizations was inaugurated early this year. Although only three NGOs applied for the grant and a mainly cultural organization was the winner, the publicity and the experience of the competition seem to bode well for the next round, now in progress.

A visit we made with Kryukov to the head of the Youth Committee of the city made evident how seriously he and the RC are taken as partners by the administration. The official said that the oblast government was planning, based on the city's experience, to introduce its own system of competitive grants for youth organizations. During a brief meeting with Yury Kazetov, the deputy mayor for social services, we heard that the social *zakaz*, the budgetary item that makes funds available to NGO programs and other social services deliverers, was scheduled to rise as a result of the RC's activities.

Magadan's media outreach program was as good as any we saw. An energetic television reporter has been contracted with (under an ISAR grant arrangement through the end of the program) to ensure mass media attention to the RC and to the NGO community overall. In only two months of activity nearly two dozen articles about NGOs and their achievements have appeared in the Magadan media. A local television network, at his instance, covered the beginning of our group meeting. An interview with the team leader and brief story on the RC and its work appeared twice in prime time news that evening. The relatively low level of business activity in the oblast is one of the reasons for a Center's limited outreach to the second sector. Its very strong government ties and the success of its NGO fair last year are factors that may encourage more engagement with the business community.

3. Impact of small grants. We heard from the head of an NGO in the environmental field that a \$3000 grant from ISAR-USAID had enabled its growth and that the realization of their project had led soon thereafter to a \$10,000 grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Several focus group representatives commented that their reputations and their status in the community rose noticeably after they were recipients of ISAR grants. The head of an organization that works to integrate disadvantaged young people into the community regretted that their application for a

\$5000 grant resulted in their receiving only \$3000, but said this amount had gone a long way to helping their program expand. Representatives of several more developed NGOs expressed their hope that the upper limit of small grants would rise in the future.

E. Blagoveshchensk

Blagoveshchensk, situated on the Amur River border with China, is a growing city of some 200,000 that is the capital of Amurskaya Oblast. Burgeoning economic interaction with China has given strong impulse to the local economy. It had been a closed city until 1993. This fact, and the “red belt” nature of its politics, have worked against NGO development. Their juridical status has not changed but personal contacts have improved relations with some officials. Many people still expect state authorities to solve social problems. NGOs have slowly built up their basic management and advocacy skills.



Blagoveshchensk on the Amur

The RC is called Amur Batyushka, meaning Little Father Amur, an affectionate reference to the town's river. It has functioned as a resource center since 1999, having had previously a well-defined ecological orientation. It has only three staff members, a director, program manager and an accountant, and there are two nearly full-time volunteers. The highly motivated staff members are all experienced in training and consulting, and can call on three external contract consultants when needed. Director Igor Sakovich is a highly practical manager with an analytical bent and skills as a writer and synthesizer. Most recently, drawing upon his experience and publications from other parts of the country, he was the author of a detailed handbook called “How to attract resources for NGO development” which will be shared with other RCs and NGOs.

Among current ISAR-supported activities are production of an NGO catalogue and the carrying out of a public campaign and event called “Sponsor of the Year” aimed at encouraging private sector contributions to NGOs. The three-room RC is very well used by the NGOs and features a library as well as a separate room for consultations. Its main current goals are strengthening the NGOs and enhancing their cooperation with business and government sectors.

1. The Center and its clients. NGO leaders took enthusiastic interest in letting their views about ISAR's programs and the RC's work be clearly heard by our visiting team member. Several insisted that levels of funding needed to be changed. The suggestions were for \$1,000 as a start-up or educational grant; \$3,000 – \$5,000 for local and focused projects; and a \$5,000 – \$7,000 range for partnership projects. They liked the non-bureaucratic approach, both of long-time RC director Oleg Sakovich and of the ISAR competition procedures. The Center's training work got high marks, but there was a felt need articulated for training on a higher level for those who have had basic training.

2. Government, media, and business. A new oblast Department for Cooperation with Community Associations and Political Parties came into being in spring 2001. At the RC's initiative, it joined with the new department to jointly run a conference on government-NGO

cooperation, after which the newly energized head of the department introduced legislation for an expanded social *zakaz* (budget allocation for social outlays) on the oblast level. The local Duma unfortunately rejected the proposal, but the issue is now joined and both department and RC will continue to advocate for its adoption.

The head of the regional Union of Young Lawyers, a very committed and aggressive young professional, participated in ISAR TOT programs organized by the Resource Center in 1998-1999 and in the program for the preparation of NGO consultants in 2001. His new skills acquired during the trainings and practical work encouraged him to run in the local Duma elections and to win a seat. (This disheartening footnote: that Duma is still called the Regional Soviet of People's Deputies. One hopes it does not act like one.)

Amur-Batyushka has carried out an aggressive and innovative program of outreach to the private sector for NGO support. In 1999 and again last year, the center organized a public event called "Sponsor of the Year". Forty-two businesses took part in it the first year and 50 did so in 2000. Awards went to those enterprises that had been most active in support of various charitable programs. The RC has worked hard to convince business people that the development of the social partnerships between business and NGOs will help solve the region's many social problems. Its recent survey among Blagoveshchensk enterprises showed that 76% of the respondents supported charitable activities in one way or another.

The local mass media carry news about NGOs programs with encouraging frequency, in part because of the steady activism that has been the hallmark of the regional RC. A journalist with whom our team member met, however, said that there was still substantial room to "educate and bring up" reporters and editors to expand their understanding of the third sector and its works.

3. Impact of small grants. Veterans of Russia is a unique NGO which advocates not only for its members' benefits but also for a civil society in the country. Its leaders had intensive development and writing training from the RC, which led to the group's receiving two ISAR grant awards and a substantial additional one from the Open Society Institute (Soros).

A \$1000 grant to the disabled support NGO Oridons was decisive in its ability to sustain itself as an effective support organization for a sector of the disabled community in Blagoveshchensk. The larger national disabled services body VOI, a carry-over from Soviet times, had resisted the entry of new and independent NGOs into the field. Oridons' success in carving its useful niche and in gaining the ability to offer alternative support was traceable directly to the clout it could muster as a result of the grant.

VI. ISAR-RFE MANAGEMENT OF THE RESOURCE CENTER NETWORK

We have analyzed above the way the project's five core activities have been carried out by the Recipient and the resource centers through which it has worked. Broader *questions of management and coordination*, as well as constraints that have faced the project, are the subjects of the present section.

The team found that the ISAR-RFE staff faced a complex set of challenges to its management and supervisory skills. There were *three jobs* to do:

- to make certain in the direction of the USAID-funded project that financial and administrative standards were maintained and the CA was being correctly carried out;
- to develop the institutional and networking skills of the resource centers; and
- to provide resource center services in Primorskiy Kray.

Despite a *high level of effectiveness overall*, we felt that the organization has not managed to carry out all three roles equally well.

We have reviewed some of the documents that govern the organization's internal operations. The 13-pages of *rules of internal operations and the ethical code are exemplary* and commendable pieces of work. Also reviewed were the standing rules (*polozhenie*) of the council of directors, or governing board. It is clear and comprehensive, but the make-up of the council raises some questions that should be addressed.

Among its members are two directors of resource centers whose organizations could stand to benefit from the council's defined role as "bearing financial responsibility for the activities of ISAR-RFE." Further, the council is also responsible for development and evaluation of ISAR's program, and this is another possible source of conflict of interest for council members. It may be that such directorial functions should be given to a smaller executive body; and that the inclusion of leading individuals from the business or media sectors to broaden its representativity might also be weighed.

A significant problem or constraint has been the *frequency of senior staff changes* in the Vladivostok office. Various combinations of people and function and structure have been tried during the life of the project. *The results have been uneven*. The core activities have been quite well pursued, as noted above. The development role in support of the resource centers and their network has not been as well performed, in part because there was less experience among Vladivostok staff in some of the main functions of a center. And by all accounts, it has not been easy for the busy staff to respond to the needs of NGOs in the immediate kray. During a three-year period beginning in October 1998, for example, only 12 seminars or trainings were done throughout the kray for a total of some 300 attendees.

We have felt that the value of having *a single director for the project*, a person of some stature, is substantial. Making certain that there is *clear responsibility and accountability* among staff in all these three areas is just one of duties of such an individual. S/he must also take on a *public relations role* as well, which appears to have had relatively little attention to date. The maintaining of cordial and responsive relations with the business and media communities in

cities where the resource centers are located, for example, should be an important component of the position.

Within the organization, such a director can take on a *key mediating role* in helping resource centers resolve some of their spiny personnel issues. The involvement of such a person at the time of the personnel crises in Khabarovsk described above, for example, might have made a difference in its outcome.

Nurturing the *resource centers' institutional development* is the second management function that needs to be well done. Working with the RCs on institutional development and assisting them in their networking is a vital job. Further, strategic planning is a necessity; and well-planned and modulated approaches to the diverse RCs require thoughtful management. We suggest that it be best assigned to a direct subordinate of the director. The third management role is that of supervisor of RC functions within Primorskiy Kray, a job that seems not to be clearly defined and assigned at the present time.

Now having the same person fill both the foregoing functions is a possibility within an improved management structure. There is a danger however that under such an arrangement a *conflict of interest* between concerns for the manager's home region and for the network as a whole might arise.

An alternate staff structural choice that the team recommends for serious consideration is that of *identifying an NGO within Primorskiy Kray*, like Eyge or Sigma in their regions, to function as RC for this large and important area. A possible candidate for such a role might be the Vladivostok NGO called Zov Taigi. We did not have any contact with it but understand that it is already an effective and experienced partner of ISAR-RFE. Beyond seeing the kray's NGOs get better service, an ancillary benefit of this change is that some of the apparently serious crowding in the present office complex might be alleviated.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The team's recommendations are in two categories below. First there is a compendium of those that derive from the earlier section dealing with the core activities of the project. The second set is more strategic in nature and looks ahead to an eventual continuation of the program after April 30, 2002, when the current CA comes to its end.

1. The Small Grants Program for local NGOs

... We suggest that if the processing time for \$500 emergency grants cannot be sharply accelerated the category be eliminated.

... Failure to win a grant is always a disappointment, and even more of one for the inexperienced NGO. It should not be further discouraged from trying again by receiving an inadequate turndown letter. The Recipient should review procedures so as to improve the quality and specificity of rejections.

... Special care should be taken in defining the goals of grants when they are announced. Their ultimate aim in broader terms relative to the society and people's well being should be clear, and NGOs should be able to determine whether or not their own capacities and goals are in synch with the grant's purposes.

... Not less than once yearly Recipient staff, together with the RCs, should review the line-up of priority areas for grant allocation in order to consider appropriate changes that take into account changing needs of local communities and the specifics of socio-economic circumstances of the regions.

2. Consulting services to resource centers

... We recommend that the structure and content of future training for consultants be comprehensively reviewed to ensure that the subjects offered respond cogently to the current needs of the more developed NGOs.

3. Publication of a bi-monthly magazine for NGOs in the region

... The evaluation team suggests that the policy of limited distribution be changed. If potential stakeholders in NGO development like officials in government structures and business associations, as well as representatives of the media, regularly receive a well-written and lively publication about the third sector and its deeds, the effect should be a strengthening of the NGO community and its image. Changes in the editorial management of the magazine will naturally be necessary to effect this change of focus.

4. Provision of training through the resource centers

... A fresh and pointed look at the whole area of training under the project is due and should be a high priority early in any continuation of the project. A well-defined strategy for NGOs training at several levels is needed. Such a strategy should be based on fresh information about NGO needs by region and should pursue region-specific goals.

5. Creation of a database for NGO organizations and resources

... We suggest that the database as it now exists and is used does not justify its being considered to be a core activity of this project. In the future it could encompass the journal and outreach activities in general. It should in any case be updated if it is to have any real utility to anyone.

Recommendations for project renewal and continuation

The continuing need for USAID support for the resource centers and the NGOs they serve, both the experienced ones and the steady stream of beginners, suggests strongly the great value of a forward investment in NGO development in this region. The following rough outline of where a follow-on project should place emphasis may have some ideas of use to USAID planners.

The future program could usefully consist of *three core program activities*. The specifics of each would be defined by the Recipient following a needs assessment done in a joint effort between that Recipient and qualified RCs. The three activities: *provision of services to local communities, development of the RC network, and promotion of civil society concepts among the wider public.*

1. Provision of services to local communities:

In spite of the progress to date, the need for continuing support of NGO-provided services to local communities is palpable in every city we visited in the Russian Far East. NGOs everywhere learn their trade, so to speak, and earn their livelihood through the provision of services to their constituents, their clients. In the process, they hone the skills and the confidence they need to gain the resources to go forward.

Continuation of the small grants program with better defined goals and changed levels of funding can make a strong contribution to those already on their way and those that are still nursing their initiative. Raising the limits of grants in the region should be carefully weighed and the starting initiative groups and inexperienced NGOs by no means left out. Civil society is woven of many sinews.

2. Development of the resource centers and their network

The differing kinds of progress made by the RCs we visited have been partially documented in this report. There remains a great deal to be done to knit them together and ensure a real interchange of ideas, experience, even inspiration. Four components, it has seemed to us, can contribute to this.

a) Selection/creation of an RC for the Primorsky Kray

The case has been made elsewhere in this paper for such a new direction. One recalls that fully one third of the entire region's people live in this province. The choice could be either through an open competition or invited proposals.

b) Newly planned training program

In the past there have been confusing instances in which ISAR-RFE and the local RCs both targeted local NGOs and, in some cases, duplicated each other. The team suggests that recipient's prime target group should be the resource centers themselves. A *careful and diversified approach* is needed because the RCs in the RFE are not at the same stage of institutional development. In their turn, RCs would develop and implement demand driven training program for local NGOs.

The training program should consist of at least *two levels of trainings*: for the start-up NGOs it should include but not be limited to registration issues, project design, proposal writing, basics of legal and tax issues, basics of management, etc. Higher level clients deserve to study, and not be limited to, subjects like NGO management and fundraising, financial management, project analysis, human resources management, marketing, advocacy, etc.

c) Consulting and technical services

As challenges and opportunities change, so too do the consultation needs of resource centers and their proteges. Consultation must move with the times but the pattern remains essentially unaltered: the Recipient trains the RCs and they in turn offer the kind of focused consultations that local NGOs need so badly.

d) Building up the network

The Recipient will need to pay special attention to the development of the network as a way to promote program efficiency and effectiveness. Among the techniques: internships for Recipient staffers organized with other USAID funded programs and for RC staff members with more experienced RCs; constant alertness to ways of cross-fertilizing ideas that work across the network; and outreach to NGOs in other parts of the Russian Federation, especially well established resource centers like the one in Novosibirsk.

3. Raising public awareness of civil society issues in local communities

The rethought and redirected magazine, an up-to-date website, and energetic public relations efforts like those in Blagoveshchensk and Magadan, are the main elements of such activity. Advocacy campaigns can reinforce growth-promoting interests of the NGOs client groups. The idea of RCs going beyond their role as service providers and taking leading positions in support of socially worthy causes in their regions was advanced at a July meeting of many of the RCs. We suggest that any such move needs to be planned with considerable care. Perhaps a pilot effort in one region should be tried during 2002 and its obstacles and payoffs analyzed carefully before taking this new direction.

VIII. ANNEXES

The Evaluation Team developed three questionnaires about the project and distributed them for completion by focus group members and others interviewed during the field evaluation trip. In addition to respondents in the five cities that we visited, NGOs in several other target cities not seen by the team also filled out the questionnaires. Over 60 respondents in all replied.

The questionnaires deal with the institutional impact of the project, the management and results of the small grants program, and with opinions concerning the project's magazine *Notes from the Far East*. The answers given to questions that required narrative replies could not be included, but percentages of all multiple-choice questions are given. Several of the more striking ones are referred to in the body of the report, and readers may gain further insights about the project from the responses given by some of its end recipients in these questionnaires.

ANNEX A : QUESTIONNAIRE RE NGO INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Total: 58 respondents

Please give candid and complete answers to the following questions. This will help the evaluation team to gain a broad and objective understanding of development trends in the NGO sector. Thank you.

NGO _____
Telephone _____ E-mail _____
Respondent's name _____
Position _____
Date _____

A. MANAGEMENT:

1. How would you describe the process of decision-making in your NGO?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. One person makes the decisions | 8.8% |
| 2. The leader always asks input | 43.9% |
| 3. An executive team makes decisions jointly | 50.9% |
| 4. Discussion and consensus in the management team | 26.3% |

Other _____

2. Does your NGO have a strategic plan for future development?

- | | |
|-----|-------|
| Yes | 87.7% |
| No | 8.8% |

3. Does your organization have written procedures for management of finances and accounting, personnel and public relations?

- | | |
|-----|-------|
| Yes | 78.9% |
| No | 17.5% |

4. Is there a monitoring system for the planning activities and assessing results in your NGO?

- | | |
|-----|-------|
| Yes | 89.5% |
| No | 7.0% |

B. HUMAN RESOURCES

1. How has your staff changed during the last two years?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. More people | 49.1% |
| 2. More active volunteers | 75.4% |
| 3. No change | 10.5% |

2. Has the number of people working in your NGO changed over the last two years?

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| 1. Number has increased | 54.4% |
| 2. No change | 28.1% |
| 3. Other | 14.0% |

Staff on the payroll in 1999 _____ in 2001 _____

3. From your point of view, has the quality of work of the staff changed?

- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| 1. No | 40.4% |
| 2. Not much | 26.3% |
| 3. Significantly | 57.9% |

If so, how? _____

4. Does your NGO rely upon volunteers or staff in providing services?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Mainly upon volunteers | 40.4% |
| 2. Mainly upon the staff | 26.3% |
| 3. Evenly upon volunteers and the staff | 28.1% |

5. Has number of the volunteers increased for the last two years?

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| 1. Increased significantly | 29.8% |
| 2. Increased somewhat | 49.1% |
| 3. Has not changed | 15.8% |

6. Do the staff and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities clearly?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Both have a clear understanding | 75.4% |
| 2. The employees have but the volunteers do not | 17.5% |
| 3. The employees don't but the volunteers do | 3.5% |
| 4. Neither has such an understanding | 3.5% |

7. Have number of NGO clients changed for the last two years?

- | | |
|-----|-------|
| Yes | 77.2% |
| No | 17.5% |

Number of clients in 1999 _____

Number of clients now _____

8. Has the range of your NGO activities expanded?

- | | |
|-----|-------|
| Yes | 61.4% |
| No | 38.6% |

If yes what new districts/regions were added _____

C. FINANCE MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES:

1. What was the annual budget in 1999?

(Specify the approximate budget)_____

2. What were the principal sources of funding?

(Please mark the relevant items.)

1. Membership fees	19.8%
2. Government sources	15.8%
3. Russian foundations	8.8%
4. Fundraising activities	21.1%
5. Private sponsorship	36.8%
6. Foreign foundations and organizations	50.9%
7. Russian businesses	12.3%
8. Other	7.0%

3. Has your NGO received any "in-kind" support (office facilities, equipment, transport, etc)?

Yes	71.9%
No	22.8%

If yes, please, specify?_____

4. What budget of your NGO do expect in 2001?

5. Has the financial situation of your NGO changed in the past two years?

1. No change	38.6%
2. There are new sources of funding now	26.3%
3. Bigger volume of funding from the same sources	22.8%
4. Some of the support was lost	17.5%

Specify the changes_____

D. PUBLIC RELATIONS, AWARENESS IN THE COMMUNITY

Questions re public relations

1. Does your NGO have any promotional materials or a brochure with a description of your activities?

Yes	78.9%
No	21.1%

2. Does your NGO use the media to inform the public of your activities?

Yes	91.2%
No	7.0%

3. Has the approach of your NGO towards public relations and public awareness changed for the last two years?

Yes	63.2%
No	33.3%

Describe changes _____

Questions re cooperation with local authorities.

4. Does your NGO cooperate with local authorities?

Yes	75.4%
No	21.1%

**5. Which of these statements describe the nature of your interaction with the authorities?
Mark more than one as applicable.**

1. They provide financial support	17.5%
2. They provide "in-kind" support	26.3%
3. A representative of the local authorities is a member of the Board or any other management structure	7.0%
4. Local authorities help us in our work but there is no direct interaction	47.4%
5. Local authorities sometimes seek advice or from us	43.9%
6. Local authorities do not give us actual support	14.0%
7. Our relations with authorities are limited to registration and payment of taxes	22.8%

6. Have there been any significant recent changes in your relations?

Yes	49.1%
No	45.6%

If yes, what were they _____

Questions re cooperation with other NGOs

7. Does your NGO belong to any permanent NGO association?

Yes	43.9%
No	45.6%

Specify _____

8. Do you cooperate actively with other NGOs on joint programs in your region?

Yes	77.2%
No	21.1%

Specify_____

9. How you could describe your cooperation with other NGOs in general?

1. No cooperation	7.0%
2. Personal contacts	63.2%
3. Regular and constructive cooperation	45.6%

Specify_____

10. Have your relations with other NGOs changed over the last two years?

Yes	54.4%
No	40.4%

If yes, specify_____

And finally, some questions re promotion of your interests.

11. Has your NGO ever tried to influence decisions made by authorities through mechanisms of promoting public interests (lobbying, participation in lawmaking, public hearing etc.)?

Yes	54.4%
No	31.6%

Specify_____

12. Are there any changes in the past two years?

Yes	49.1%
No	38.6%

Describe changes_____

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

ANNEX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

Total 63 processed

Date	_____
Project	_____
NGO	_____
NGO's Leader	_____
Position	_____

I. CARRYING OUT OF A SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM FOR NGOS

1. How would you characterize ISAR-RFE staff assistance during the grant program?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Always ready to offer useful help | 27.9% |
| 2. Ready to offer useful help | 16.4% |
| 3. Not always ready to help and not very useful | 3.3 % |
| 4. Not ready to help and of no value | 1.6% |

4. Have the issues addressed under the grant competition, the defined problems and goals, reflected the urgent problems of your region?

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| Yes | 93.7% |
| No | 0% |
| Partially | 6.3% |

5. Have the issues in the grant competitions corresponded to those your NGO addresses?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|-------|
| In large measure | 80% |
| Mostly not | 0% |
| Close enough to participate in the RFP | 20.6% |

6. Were the conditions of the RFP clear to you?

	Yes	No	Partially
Criteria for awards to be granted	92.1%	0%	4.0%
Requirements for the contents of proposals	95.2%	0%	3.2%
Requirements of the proposal format	92.1%	0%	6.3%
Limitations	92.1%	1.6%	3.2%
Application submission procedure	95.2%	0%	3.2%

7. Where did you learn about the RFP?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| From the Resource Center office | 65.1% |
| From the ISAR-RFE office | 17.5% |
| From the media (Internet, TV, radio) | 15.9% |
| In the course of other activities of the Resource Center | 23.8% |

8. Did you enough time to submit your proposal?

Yes	88.9%
No	7.9%

9. What, in your opinion, is the length of time usually needed to complete an application after an RFP has been announced?

1 month	20.6%
2 months	47.6%
3 months	28.6%
Other_____	

10. Did you use any RC assistance/services while making a proposal for this RFP?

Yes	71.4%
No (Including Don't know, unnecessary, etc.)	23.8%
Specify_____	

11. Was the amount of the grant enough to reach the goals of your project?

Yes	63.5%
No	31.7%
(Why?)_____	

12. Was procedure of the grant competition clear and articulate?

Yes	90.5%
No	1.6%

II. PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

1. Did you use Resource Center services during the project implementation?

Yes	63.5%
No	27.0%

If yes:

Services	Percentage citing:	Rank the quality of service (1 – poor up to 3 –very well)
Consultations	54.0%	
Seminars/Training	31.7%	
Technical support	36.5%	

Other (specify)_____

2. If you didn't call upon any RC services, please explain why

Was unaware of their existence	0%
--------------------------------	----

There was no need	17.5%
Other	1.1%

3. How would you define the ISAR-RFE requirements for reporting on certain activities?

Very difficult for us	0%
Difficult but useful	71.4%
Difficult and of no value	3.2%
Simple and of no value	3.2%

Why? _____

4. Did the sponsor monitor the project?

Yes	44.4%
No	28.6%

B. How often did the staff of the RC or ISAR-RFE representatives visit you in the course of project implementation?

1. Several times	33.3%
2. Once	33.3%
3. Didn't visit	22.2%

B. Can you remember the purpose of the visits?

Describe _____

B. How did Resource Center staff or ISAR-RFE representatives facilitate the project implementation?

1. Very efficiently	52.4%
2. Somewhat	17.5%
3. Didn't assist	15.9%

Give examples _____

III. PROGRAM IMPACT/RESULTS FOR NGOS:

1. Has fulfillment of the grant award resulted in changes within your organization?

Yes	13.2%
No	85.7%
If yes, please specify _____	

2. The resource centers offer assistance in a number of specific areas. Has your NGO gotten assistance from the RC in the following areas?

	Yes	No
Fundraising	34.9%	19.0%

Management systems	39.7%	17.5%
Broader outreach in the region or in services offered	27.0%	22.2%
Increase in number of clients	30.2%	19.0%
Collaboration with other NGO	76.2%	7.9%
Collaboration with the business sector	31.7%	20.6%
Collaboration with government authorities	44.4%	14.3%
Collaboration with the media	60.3%	11.1%
Improving the image of your NGO	63.5%	9.5%

3. Had you used services of local RCs or coordinators prior to your participation in the grant program?

Yes	55.6%
No	33.3%

4. How do you evaluate the most important results of your participation in the small grant program? Based upon your experience, please indicate your level of agreement with the factors below:

	Agree	Agree partially	Disagree
1. Our participation in the grant program enabled us to increase the number of people whom we can help.	84.1%	3.2%	0.0%
2. We have been able to increase the outreach of our services	50.8%	27.0%	7.9%
3. We were able to add new services to our program	61.9%	17.5%	1.6%
4. We have become more professional technically in our area	68.3%	9.5%	4.8%
5. We are more professional and organized	57.1%	27.0%	1.6%
6. Our image in the community has been improved	66.7%	15.9%	3.2%
7. We were able to find new sources of funding	42.9%	20.6%	11.1%
8. We improved our relationship with local authorities	46.0%	30.2%	6.3%
9. We have established new contacts with NGOs in our region	71.4%	9.5%	3.2%

5. Below are a number of statements about the grant program. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of them

	Agree	Agree partially	Disagree
1. This program allowed us to become more independent from the RC	7.9%	31.7%	38.1%
2. There was too much of paperwork and reporting for such a program.	7.9%	20.6%	47.6%
3. We would have liked to do different thing but the program obliged us to do what we did not wish to do	1.6%	4.8%	58.7%
4. The training and consultations we received in connection with the program did not correspond to our needs	1.6%	6.3%	50.8%
5. People in our region feel suspicious about us for using funds from abroad	7.9%	12.7%	39.7%
6. Very strong competition and hostility exist among NGOs in our city	3.2%	11.1%	47.6%

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

ANNEX C : QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE MAGAZINE “NOTES FROM THE FAR EAST”

Total: 58 respondents

1. Does your NGO receive the magazine?

Yes	100%
No	0%

2. Regularly?

Yes	78.9%
No	21.1%

3. Have you ever contributed articles to it?

Yes	40.4%
No	57.9%

4. Have you ever suggested a change in the publication's format?

Yes	7.0%
No	84.2%

If yes...

5. Did ISAR welcome your ideas and adopt them?

1. They liked and adopted them	8.8%
2. They liked them but have not adopted them	1.8%
3. Did not adopt them but did not give any reason	1.8%
4. Rejected immediately	0%

6. Has the magazine succeeded in advancing toward these four goals?

Goals of the magazine	Reached	Reached partially	Not reached
1. Helping NGOs find new resources	33.3%	57.9%	7.0%
2. Sharing experiences	70.2%	29.8%	0.0%
3. Encouraging cooperation among NGOs	40.4%	49.1%	3.5%
4. Increasing the community's visibility within the region	47.4%	36.8%	12.3%

7. How do you receive the Journal?

1. By subscription directly from ISAR DV	59.6%
2. From the RC	33.3%

8. How could its distribution be improved to give it greater impact?

9. Are you aware of any other media that have shown an interest in the publication?

Yes	28.1%
No	66.7%

10. Are you aware of any cases when other media outlets repeated articles from it?

Yes	21.1%
No	70.2%

11. What is your opinion of the journal's format?

12. Does the use of the cartoon figure on the cover contribute to its variety and interest?

Yes	61.4%
No	36.8%

13. What about the quality of printing and overall presentation – how might they be improved?

14. What kinds of articles do you miss in the journal?

15. Is there enough “hard news” about opportunities and challenges offered for NGOs?

Yes	61.4%
No	33.3%

16. How would you compare the journal to other services offered by ISAR-RFE?

Services	Very much needed, cannot do without it	Needed but can do without it	Not needed, can do without it easily
Database	63.2%	17.5%	3.5%
Consultations	70.2%	15.8%	1.8%
Journal	77.2%	15.8%	1.8%
Training	75.4%	10.5%	0.0%
Grant-making	87.7%	5.3%	0.0%

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!